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DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE

IN CHARGE OF
EDNA L. FOLEY, R.N.

SIGNIFICANT PORTENTS

Miss Ida Tarbell recently said that Chicago was the social laboratory of the United States, and social workers who have the good fortune to live there, agree with her. Time never ticks slowly in Chicago, and work is hardly begun before new work is suggested by it. Two events there of tremendous interest in the nursing world and of national scope in their significance have been the recent appointment of a Chicago visiting nurse as first woman bailiff attached to any municipal court, and the *Chicago Tribune's* courageous and well-sustained exposure of quack "physicians" who prey upon the credulity and ignorance of weak men and women. Nurses in smaller cities, where newspaper columns are filled with the advertisements of unethical so-called "physicians" are advised to send for the back numbers of the *Tribune*, beginning with October 26. In this a whole page is devoted to a photograph, description, address and personal history of each of seven or eight of the worst offenders in Chicago, "specialists," who deal only with the diseases of men, and whose absurd claims of curing innocent men of diseases they have never had, are only exceeded by the size of their fees. Every large city is infested with healers of this order, but those in Chicago are rapidly moving elsewhere, thanks to the *Tribune*. Its daily and fearless exposure of these men and their methods is well worth reading and full of helpful suggestions. It has stimulated the federal authorities to take action in several instances, and perhaps other cities will be roused to coöperate in a state-wide campaign to drive these men out of this wretched business.

The appointment of Isabel Carruthers (Rockford Hospital), for two and one-half years a member of the Visiting Nurse Staff, as woman bailiff of the Court of Domestic Relations, was the result of the far-seeing vision of Municipal Judge Uhlir. For months Judge Uhlir felt the need of a worker with a nurse's training, who would talk with and advise the young mothers whose tiny babies came to the court with them

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and were so obviously neglected and unhappy. The coöperation of the Visiting Nurse Association was sought, and after some misgivings, for the district field in large, the Association for two months paid the salary of a visiting nurse whose whole day was given to the Court. The afternoons were spent in visiting homes where illness or physical disability indicated that there were other causes for a domestic upheaval than incompatibility or a deserting husband. Many cases were referred from the court room to relief or medical agencies, and the nurse had a busy and interesting month. Her report is reprinted in full, as one unique in nursing annals. The Court of Domestic Relations is the only municipal court entirely given over to cases involving domestic infelicity and now it has this added distinction of having a special court nurse. Positions of this sort place a grave responsibility on nurses' shoulders, and only adequate preparation can fit us to meet and hold them. Miss Carruthers first became interested in the court work while taking the summer work at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, and she has found the course of daily help to her in this new field. The Chicago Visiting Nurse Association released her reluctantly, but both court and bailiff so valued the connection with this nursing organization that the Association has been asked to serve in an advisory capacity in court work, for the present.

COURT OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Report for Month Ending October 25, 1913

Interviews in court, 105: (1) abuse 4, (2) non-support 53, (3) bastardy 24, (4) abandonment 10, (5) witness 5, (6) unclassified 9, total 105.

Abuse, 4: (a) confusion of head, 1; (b) menopause, complicated by melancholia, 1; (c) physical examinations, 2. Total, 4.

Non-support, 53. (a) physical examinations, 9; wife gynecological, placed under treatment at Polyclinic Dispensary; wife, physical exhaustion; wife, dementia; child, idiot (sent to Oak Forest); husband, epilepsy, (under treatment at Rush Dispensary); husbands, tuberculosis, referred to Municipal Tuberculosis Sanatorium; husband, maniacal depressive insanity (sent to Detention Hospital); child, syphilitic and an idiot (placed in County Hospital).

(b) Mothers with babes, 11.

(c) Pregnant women, 5: all of whom were instructed and referred to other agencies for care at time of confinement.

Bastardy, 24: (a) mothers with babes, 12, 1 proved on examination to have varicose veins; (b) single pregnant women, 12, 1 with gonorrheal infection placed under treatment at Northwestern Dispensary; placed in homes, 2; the remaining 10 have been interviewed and partial arrangements made for care during lying-in period.

Court emergencies, 3: (a) apparent hysteria, 1; (b) extreme nervousness, 1; (c) fainting spell, 1.

Cases referred from Court to other agencies, 38: (a) Infant Welfare 14; (b) Visit-

ing Nurse Association, 8; (c) United Charities, 10; (d) County Agent, 2; (e) St Vincent De Paul Society, 1; (f) Dispensary (for medical care) 3.

Total visits 39: (a) visits to homes 34, (b) visits to other agencies 5, County Hospital, Lodging House for Women and Children, Mothers' Homes, Florence Crittenden Home, St. Margaret's Home.

Cases referred to other agencies after home visit, 11: (a) Visiting Nurse Association, 4; (b) United Charities, 2; (c) County Agent, 1; (d) Dispensary, 2; (e) Municipal Tuberculosis Sanatorium, 1; (f) St. Vincent De Paul Society, 1.

Of the 12 unmarried pregnant women, it was possible to place only two promptly. Of the remaining 10, one reported that her lawyer's sister was going to take care of her in her own home. Further inquiry revealed the fact that this sister claimed to be a midwife.

Another particularly pathetic case was that of an immigrant girl under twenty years of age, who refused to accept hospital treatment (although more than 8 months pregnant) as she was sending \$5.00 per month of her earnings to her dependent mother in the old country and could afford to lose no time.

A third girl, though only nineteen, gave a history of two previous abortions and was anxious to have a third one performed. Her statement that she did not know this was wrong and that she did not realize that in so doing she was destroying life, was true. She had absolutely no moral sense; had never had any training or education along that line, and furthermore had a mother who felt no obligation to the girl.

Dr. Anna Dwyer's examinations in Court have revealed some startling facts as to the physical condition of many of the offenders. She found tuberculosis, insanity, idiocy, syphilis and epilepsy, besides minor ailments. We have been fortunate so far in being able to comply almost immediately with her recommendations, and the patients are now being treated in various hospitals, dispensaries and homes.

ISABELLE CARRUTHERS,

Visiting Nurse, Court of Domestic Relations, Chicago.

ITEMS

KENTUCKY. Margaret Arnett (St. Agnes Hospital, Baltimore) has been appointed executive secretary of the Fayette County Anti-Tuberculosis Association to succeed Chloe Jackson, R.N. Miss Arnett was assistant for several years to Dr. A. J. Stuckey, whose discovery and treatment of trachoma among the poor whites of the Kentucky mountains has been so far-reaching.

Emma Hunt; (Louisville City Hospital) has been appointed Mason County tuberculosis nurse by the Kentucky Board of Tuberculosis Commissioners. Her headquarters are in Maysville.

Public health nurses everywhere will be very glad to hear that Fayette County has just been announced a Sanatorium District, and a new sanatorium for consumptives will soon be erected there, thanks to the whirlwind but efficient campaign of the new state tuberculosis committee, of which Chloe Jackson is now chief executive nurse. Miss

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Jackson will be able to tackle a new county even more vigorously now, for her first campaign was such a success. The newspapers supported her splendidly, especially the *Lexington Herald*.

These campaigns are becoming deservedly more wide-spread. Chicago had one five years ago when the citizens, after a big educational rally of several weeks, voted an annual tax of nearly half a million dollars for the erection and maintenance of a municipal tuberculosis sanatorium. In this campaign, as well as in a later one in Cleveland, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company agents rendered valuable assistance by distributing and explaining the literature from the tuberculosis headquarters in all the homes of their policy holders.

ILLINOIS. The Annual State Conference of Charities was held in Rockford in October and so many public health nurses from all over the state were there that a session for them has been discussed for another year. Every kind of nursing was represented and their contributions in the exhibit were good. The Rockford Visiting Nurse Association had a splendid exhibit of charts and photographs, showing the development of their work, their coöperation with the tuberculosis society and the results of their baby-saving campaign of the previous summer. A striking wall chart was adorned with six or eight kinds of "baby killers" as the various types of bad nipples were styled. Spot maps showed the tuberculosis congestion, and the whole exhibit gave a very clear idea of the progress of the work in the past year.

The Rockford Visiting Nurse Association, Violet Jensen, R.N., Head Nurse, has just been presented with an electric runabout in thorough repair, and it's upkeep and charging have been guaranteed by several interested citizens of Rockford.

The Chicago Visiting Nurse Association exhibited a simple little two-room doll house, showing a bad bed-room for a typhoid patient, and a good room. The house was 17 by 24 inches and perhaps was of particular interest to nurses, for it cost not quite \$10 and was entirely planned and arranged for by the members of the Visiting Nurse Association Auxilliary. As first planned, the house would have cost, as an expert exhibitor said, "at least \$200.00," but the cheaper box did quite as well and the results were all that could have been asked.

Aurora, Chicago Heights, Olney and Champaign-Urbana also presented exhibits or reports of their public health nursing work, and to quote Dr. Wm. A. Evans in the *Chicago Tribune*:

It is safe to predict that before the next Conference there will be a material increase in the number of county nurses and dispensaries.

As Dr. Palmer of Springfield said, the difficulty in finding money for welfare work ceases soon after the nurse makes her first report.

When the people in the smaller cities, the towns and the country districts learn of the sick and needy people that the nurse has found, they become willing to help out.

This is a pretty fine compliment and we wish that there were more nurses ready to respond when the call for them comes. Washington, Wisconsin and Minnesota are all asking for nurses with public health training or experience.

The report of the first year's work of the Winnetka visiting nurse will interest nurses who are working alone in small towns or villages. One hundred and eighty nine patients from 110 families, representing twelve nationalities, were called upon 1808 times during the year. To a passing motorist, Winnetka looks like a prosperous suburban village with many beautiful homes and no poor ones. To a social worker from the New York east side, Winnetka would appear strictly rural and with no plague spots. To the ex-Chicago visiting nurse, Mary Garretson, who has done all this with the school work, and who organized fortnightly mothers' meetings, is due much of the credit for this lack of congestion and bad housing condition. Every community, no matter how small, has its problems and its poor, even if the latter are not as glaringly in evidence as they would be in the city. A go-between is needed, also an investigator and health police-women, and a good visiting nurse is something that no community can afford to be without. A quotation from Miss Garretson's report will show how well she is serving to interpret and introduce her patients and the rest of the village to each other.

If we were to name the people who have helped during the past year and eight months, we would include a large part of the population of Winnetka. In countless ways, many people have stood ready to help and it is only because of this general interest that we have accomplished what has been done.

An Illinois public health nurse enlivened a long summer vacation by nursing in a very rural district in Missouri. Her first patient was a little chap of eight years who was slowly convalescing from an appendectomy, complicated by a fecal fistula. After the first few anxious days, Raymond's remarks were more interesting than his temperature, so the nurse recorded both.

Raymond had been getting egg nogs minus the "stick." He had also been getting alcohol rubs. One day upon giving the lad his egg nog, he said "I get the egg inside and the nog out, don't I nurse?"

Doctor to Raymond, during dressing of wound. "Better keep your eyes away, boy, while we're dressing you!" Raymond, "But I want to see when to flinch, doctor."

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The following are "sure cures" implicitly believed in in that district:

To prevent bed sores, put pan of water under patient's bed.

To prevent "after pains" put axe under bed (favorite tried and true remedy with colored mammies).

Sure sedative, put shoes under bed with toes pointing out.

When burying amputated limbs be sure fingers and toes are straight, else patient will have excruciating pains in stump.

The second annual report of the Social Service Committee of the Children's Memorial Hospital, Adelaide Walsh, R.N., director, indicates a splendid piece of hospital organization. The Committee consists of 30 active and 51 sustaining members, whose dues and subscriptions largely support this department. The work is divided among four committees, advisory, membership, visiting and clothing, and a very close coöperation has been established with twenty or more institutions and societies. 2119 patients were followed up, advised or referred during the year, to 19 different agencies. The Committee has also become a corporate member of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing. The report of its Chairman places much of the credit for this year of good work where it rightfully belongs, on Miss Walsh's shoulders. Her enthusiasm and interest in her work is contagious, and she understands the secret of fine teamwork.

KANSAS. The University of Kansas has opened a department of Child Welfare, said to be the first of its kind in an educational institution in the United States. It plans to make its courses in child psychology available for parents all over the state, to give instruction in child welfare work and to organize throughout the state parents' and civic improvement societies that will look after the welfare, especially the social and recreational, of all children. Perhaps this department is the forerunner of better, bigger things for Kansas in the field of public health nursing.

OHIO. The Columbus Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis has recently opened its first Open-Air School for Tuberculous Children. Twenty-five are in attendance and the school is to be opened every day but Sunday. This is getting back to the original Boston idea, that children in these schools are not well children, and need more observation than normal children. The Saturday routine is to be varied and will not follow closely the regular school routine. Six days is infinitely better for these children than five, if their mothers can be persuaded to spare them on Saturday. In Chicago, too many children were absent every week to make Saturday school feasible, but in Boston, and in the Chicago summer schools this plan worked very well. Bessie M. McMullin R.N., the head nurse, and Blanche Chenowith,

the school nurse and the teacher of the Open-Air School were sent to Chicago to inspect the roof-schools and open window rooms in the public schools, before the Columbus Schools were opened.

The Columbus Society requires that all the staff-workers shall be socially trained either before accepted on the staff or while with the Society. A part of this special training is secured at the Ohio State University, where the nurses are admitted as special students, to a year's course in sociology. They attend three one-hour sessions weekly, paying the tuition themselves, but being given the time by the Society. The first semester is devoted to a survey of modern charity, and takes up the treatment of the dependent and defective classes, embracing a review of the history of poor relief in Great Britain and the United States; outdoor and indoor relief, both public and private; organized charity; the treatment of the vagrant, the care of dependent children, the insane, the feeble-minded, the epileptic and the education of the blind and deaf. The work of the second semester includes criminology, a study of crime, and the social and physiological causes of crime, a classification and study of the criminal with reference to the character of the various types and the causes of each, an historical study of prison systems and methods, the indeterminate sentence, the probation, and parole laws, the Juvenile Court and its agencies to prevent crime.

Such a course would be of inestimable value to all public health nurses living in university towns. Are other schools and societies as liberal and as fortunate as those of Columbus?

MICHIGAN. The Detroit District Nursing Society, one of the oldest and largest auxiliaries of the Detroit Visiting Nurse Association, in addition to the entire support of two of the staff nurses, has this year contributed to their educational advantage in large measure. It has made it possible to send them for a three months' course of study to the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. Louise Kitscher and Alice Walker are the two nurses who are now profiting by their opportunities.

The Tau Beta Alumnae Association of the Liggett Home and Day School is another of the auxiliaries that has for many years contributed literally in service, time and money to the Visiting Nurse Association. Twice a week members meet and prepare diets for the sick poor, and they personally distribute them into the homes of the patients. They also support entirely one nurse, Henrietta Potts, and through their generosity she is likewise enjoying the privileges of a course in the same school. The nurses are interested and appreciative of their rare educational advantages, and they are applying themselves to their work with enthusiasm. The salaries are paid to the nurses during their absence by the respective auxiliaries.